

Washington Report:**Reds and Incompetents
Infest Security Bureaus**

By FULTON LEWIS, JR.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18.

IT HAS been the policy of U.S. military and civilian intelligence agencies to go slow in hiring foreign-born persons for sensitive jobs. This was especially true during World War II, when German and Japanese-born citizens had difficulty in establishing their patriotism and finding positions commensurate with their skill.

This would not be alarming if there were any certainty that Soviet espionage agents could be screened and denied jobs. But, as I related yesterday, the military and civilian intelligence services are incapable of keeping Communists, Soviet agents and incompetents off the payroll even today.

In one intelligence agency of the Government an employee was hired who had an arrest record of preaching communism at military barracks. Another was caught taking secret documents to New York City without authority.

Intelligence agencies must

work in the murk of secrecy. It is difficult for Congress to investigate. But unless the McCarran Internal Security Subcommittee of the Senate takes a crack at it the nation may wake up betrayed as badly as, or worse than, it was by Hiss, Gold, Fuchs and the other Communists and traitors.

WHEN war approaches, every nation expands its activity and tactics in infiltrating intelligence services of potential enemies. One way is to order agents already planted in such secret agencies to increase their activity either by positive or negative action. A job not done can be as damaging as a secret document stolen from a confidential file.

Today intelligence agencies of this Government are cluttered with incompetents and others more closely aligned to communist ideology. These are facts brought to me by patriotic officers and civilian employees of those agencies who have been forced into silence while the competence of their secret units withered by design or from the fumbling of incompetent favorites placed in charge by higher authorities for political or other reasons.

The McCarran Subcommittee can investigate the personnel of the nation's intelligence service without revealing any secrets. This is all the military and civilian employees who are disturbed by these conditions are asking.

THE complaint goes to the top echelon of the Pentagon, where manpower policies are determined. The reason, for instance, why a taxicab driver was taken off the street and placed in charge of two skilled technicians in a secret agency, should be aired. It is one of numerous documented instances where those with leaning toward Russia or with pull higher up have been handed high paying jobs although they lack technical skill.

There is something wrong at the Pentagon when the heads of certain intelligence units feel prompted periodically to circulate the oath of office among their employees, with the section about defending the Constitution of the United States against "all enemies foreign and domestic" underlined. That is being done. But it is not enough. Congress should step in.

Copyright, 1951, King Features Syndicate, Inc.

X